

Siim Kallas on the use of body scanning technology

Transport: Vice-President Siim Kallas addresses the European Parliament on the use of body scanning technology in airport security

Vice-President Siim Kallas, EU Commissioner for transport, today addressed the European Parliament on the use of body scanning technology in airport security, as part of a broader debate on the operation of intelligence services in the context of counter-terrorism strategies. In setting out the timetable for the debate on the regulation of body scanning technology (see below), the Vice-President underlined that "to fight terrorism targeting civil aviation we need a variety of combined and coordinated measures – intelligence, profiling, different search methods and international cooperation." He stressed that "body scanning technology is not a panacea," and said that questions relating to the value-added of this technology to airport security, as well as health and privacy issues, needed to be looked at very seriously.

The Vice-President said, "The safety and security of passengers is **the** major priority for me as transport Commissioner. The attempted terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines flight 253 to Detroit on 25 December confirmed the reality of the threat to civil aviation. The travelling public, the media and aviation stakeholders all legitimately ask us whether the existing security arrangements are good enough or whether we need to take further action?"

In his speech, the Vice-President stressed that "existing EU standards on aviation security were correctly implemented on 25 December at Amsterdam Schiphol airport." He said that "aviation remains a target for terrorists. We cannot ignore that. But the incident showed first of all the failure of intelligence – a failure to connect the dots."

The timetable – next steps

The Vice-President will discuss the regulation of body scanning technology with transport ministers this week at the informal ministerial in La Coruña, Spain (February 12). The Vice-President will present in April a detailed report to the European Parliament on the use of body scanning technology, examining security, as well as health and privacy issues. This report should provide a sound basis for a decision on whether to move ahead with EU-wide regulation on the use of body scanning technology or to leave the regulation of the use of this technology in airport security to be decided at national level, as is currently the case.

The speech is available online: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kallas/headlines/speeches/index_en.htm

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